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John W. Ryan
c/o Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering
2445 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-1420

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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3C

In re application of
Christopher William Preist
Application No. 09/661,463
Filed: September 13, 2000
For: AUCTION METHOD AND APPARATUS
FOR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

DECISION ON REQUEST
FOR WITHDRAWAL OF
ATTORNEY

This is a decision on the request filed on April 10, 2003, under 37 CFR 1.36 and MPEP 402.06, requesting permission to withdraw as the attorney of record in the above-identified application.

The request is **NOT APPROVED**.

Under 37 CFR 1.36 an attorney may withdraw only upon application to and approval by the Commissioner. It should be noted that a withdrawal is effective when approved, not when filed. Besides giving due notice to his or her client and delivering to the client all papers and property to which the client is entitled as specified under 37 CFR 10.40, approval of such a request requires that the following conditions be met:

- A) Each attorney of record must sign the notice of withdrawal, or the notice must contain a clear indication of one attorney signing on behalf of another, because the Office does not recognize law firms;
- B) A proper reason for the withdrawal as enumerated in 37 CFR 10.40(b) or subsection (1)-(6) of 37 CFR 10.40(c) must be provided; and
- C) If withdrawal is requested in accordance with 37 CFR 10.40(c) above, there must be at least 30 days between approval of the withdrawal and the later of the expiration date of a time period for reply or the expiration date of the period which can be obtained by a petition and fee for extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a).

The request to withdraw as attorney is not accepted in the above-identified application because the request lacks condition B) above.

Given the statements included in the request that the firm "is closing down the patent prosecution practice and all patent practitioners are leaving" and "the firm will no longer be handling any patent prosecution work"; it is not clear that the statements satisfy one of the valid reasons for withdrawal under 37 CFR 10.40 (b)(1)-(4) or (c)(1)-(6). Simply because the law firm will no longer be handling any patent prosecution work, that does not automatically meet one of the acceptable reasons for an attorney withdrawal. Condition B) can be met by clearly specifying one of the valid reasons for withdrawal under 37 CFR 10.40 (b)(1)-(4) or (c)(1)-(6).


Randolph A. Reese
Randolph A. Reese
Special Programs Examiner
Patent Technology Center 3600
(703) 308-2121
Facsimile No.: (703) 605-0586

RAR/tpl: 4/18/03